

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236037

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ROME FROM USUN NEW YORK
SEPT 30:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3411

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IT, US, XA

SUBJECT: ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI'S MEETING WITH
AMBASSADOR YOUNG: THE HORN OF AFRICA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN CALL ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG AT USUN ON
SEPTEMBER 29, ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI EXPRESSED HIS
CONCERN ABOUT THE DEEPENING CRISIS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA
AND RECOMMENDED THAT US SEEK TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH
ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA TO BRING ABOUT AN EARLY CEASE FIRE.
END SUMMARY.

2. IN OPENING THE CONVERSATION, FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI INFORMED
AMBASSADOR YOUNG THAT THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY AHD ATTACKED THE
ITALIAN EMBASSY IN ADDIS ABABA ON SEPTEMBER 28 AT THE VERY
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MOMENT THAT HE WAS MEETING WITH THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER HERE IN NEW YORK. FORLANI THEN EXPRESSED HIS
DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, RE-
CALLED THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITIES IN SOMALIA
AND ETHIOPIA, AND SAID THAT ITALY IS TRYING TO ENCOURAGE
BOTH SIDES TO MOVE TOWARD A TRUCE IN THE OGADAN. IT WAS
IMPORTANT, HE EMPHASIZED, FOR THE EST TO BE IN CONTACT

WITH BOTH SIDES.

3. THE SOVIETS, FORLANI NOTED, HAD BEEN SENDING ARMS TO BOTH SIDES. THE WEST IN CONTRAST SHOULD TRY TO ASSIST ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA NOT ONLY TO BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE FIGHTING, BUT ALSO TO OFFER THEM ECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ONCE THE FIGHTING STOPS.

4. FORLANI SAID THAT HE RECOGNIZED THAT ITALIAN EFFORTS BY THEMSELVES COULD HAVE ONLY LIMITED IMPACT. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE US COULD HAVE GREATER INFLUENCE IN ENCOURAGING THE SIDES TO MOVE TOWARD A TRUCE. FORLANI SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO RAISED THIS MATTER IN HIS RECENT MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT.

5. AMBASSADOR YOUNG OBSERVED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THE US ALONE COULD BRING ABOUT A TRUCE AND IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS BY THEMSELVES ALSO COULD NOT DO SO. YOUNG SAID THE SOVIETS ALSO SEEMED INTERESTED IN FINDING A WAY TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US AND THE USSR, TOGETHER WITH SEVERAL COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, TO TRY TO WORK TOGETHER ON THIS. YOUNG OBSERVED THAT IN THE LONG RUN IT WAS DOUBTFUL THAT EITHER SOMALIA OR ETHIOPIA WOULD LEAVE THE WESTERN CAMP. IT WAS ALSO DOUBTFUL WHETHER EITHER OF THE ARMIES COULD SUSTAIN LENGTHY FIGHTING. PART OF THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY
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HAD DEFECTED BEFORE THE FIGHTING BEGAN. SOMALI CAPABILITIES WERE LIMITED.

6. FORLANI OBSERVED THAT IT SEEMED DIFFICULT TO TRY TO INVOLVE A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN ARRANGING A TRUCE. THE SITUATION WAS GETTING WORSE AND THE SOMALIS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR PROSPECTS FOR HOLDING OUT VERY LONG. THE SOLE BENEFICIARY FROM A CONTINUING PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATION IN THE HORN, HE OBSERVED, WOULD BE THE SOVIET UNION. IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF THE US AND THE WEST TO PREVENT THE SOVIETS FROM ESTABLISHING ADDITIONAL BASES, THUS STRENGTHENING THEIR POSITION IN THE AREA AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WEST. IT IS ALSO UNDESIRABLE THAT THE HORN OF AFRICA BECOME AN AREA OF SOVIET/US RIVALRY. FORLANI ADDED THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE ALSO INTERESTED IN THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFLICT AND IRONICALLY COULD BE SEEN AS HAVING INTERESTS AT LEAST PARTLY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE SOVIETS - I.E., NEITHER OF THEM WANTS TO SEE THE RED SEA BECOME ARAB-CONTROLLED.

7. IN CONCLUSION, FORLANI EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO DO WHAT IT COULD TO BRING

ABOUT A BADLY-NEEDED TRUCE. OTHRWISE THE SITUATION WOULD
CONTINUE TO DETERIORAT, BECOMING PROGRESSIVELY MORE DAN-
GEROUS AND LESS CONTROLLABLE. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID HE
AGREED WITH FORLANI'S ANALYSIS. YOUNG UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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